

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-12 and 17-23 remain as presented in the prior response entitled "Amendment and Response to Office Action" filed October 4, 2004. Claims 13-16 were withdrawn in the prior response and are reinstated herein as new claims 24-27. New claims 28-31 are added.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings in the application.

Claim 1 (original): A sports equipment handle comprising:

an elongate shaft made of a first material and including at least one region of reduced diameter or thickness; and

a cover made of a second material and surrounding the shaft in a manner whereby the outer diameter of the handle including the cover is substantially uniform and the cover includes at least one region of increased thickness in the region of the shaft having the reduced diameter or thickness.

Claim 2 (original): The sports equipment handle of claim 1 wherein the shaft includes a tapered end portion defining the region on the shaft of reduced diameter or thickness.

Claim 3 (original): The sports equipment handle of claim 2 suitable for use on a lacrosse stick including a lacrosse head and the tapered end portion of the shaft extends into the head.

Claim 4 (original): The sports equipment handle of claim 1 wherein the material comprising the shaft is extruded onto the shaft.

Claim 5 (original): The sports equipment handle of claim 1 suitable for use on a lacrosse stick and wherein the shaft includes opposed tapered end portions defining the regions on the shaft of reduced diameter or thickness.

Claim 6 (original): The sports equipment handle of claim 1 wherein the material comprising the cover is tinted in the region of the shaft with the reduced diameter or thickness.

Claim 7 (original): The sports equipment handle of claim 1 wherein the shaft includes a plurality of elongate longitudinally grooves formed thereon and extending around the circumference thereof in spaced-apart relationship, the respective grooves defining the regions on the shaft of

reduced diameter or thickness and the material comprising the ribs fills the grooves respectively and defines elongate longitudinally inwardly extending ribs.

Claim 8 (original): The sports equipment handle of claim 7 suitable for use in connection with a lacrosse stick.

Claim 9 (original): The sports equipment handle of claim 1 wherein the cover includes an interior surface and the shaft includes a plurality of longitudinal grooves thereon and extending around the circumference thereof in spaced-apart relationship, the respective grooves defining the regions on the shaft of reduced thickness and the cover defining elongate longitudinal ribs extending outwardly from the interior surface and spaced around the circumference thereof and filling the respective grooves when the cover surrounds the shaft.

Claim 10 (original): A sports equipment handle comprising:
a shaft made of a first material and defining a plurality of elongate longitudinal edges extending around the periphery thereof in spaced-apart relationship; and
a plurality of elongate longitudinal cushioning ribs made of a second material and overlying the plurality of edges respectively.

Claim 11 (original): The sports equipment handle of claim 10 wherein the edges comprise respective elongate longitudinal grooves formed in the shaft.

Claim 12 (original): The sports equipment handle of claim 11 wherein the second material fills the respective grooves to define the respective ribs.

Claim 13 (withdrawn): The sports equipment handle of claim 10 wherein the shaft includes exterior and interior surfaces and the edges define elongate longitudinal slits extending through the shaft, the ribs extending through the slits respectively and into the interior surface of the shaft.

Claim 14 (withdrawn): The sports equipment handle of claim 10 wherein the edges protrude outwardly from the exterior surface of the shaft and the ribs include respective interior surfaces configured to abut against the respective edges and an adhesive secures the ribs to the respective edges.

Claim 15 (withdrawn): The sports equipment handle of claim 10 wherein the shaft and ribs include interior and exterior surfaces respectively, the ribs being unitary with a one-piece elongate cover adapted to surround the shaft and the interior surface of the ribs being spaced from the edges respectively.

Claim 16 (withdrawn): The sports equipment handle of claim 10 wherein the plurality of edges define respective depressions therebetween and the ribs overly the depressions respectively.

Claim 17 (original): The sports equipment handle of claim 10 wherein the ribs protrude unitarily outwardly from the interior surface of a cover surrounding the shaft and the cover is applied to the shaft in a relationship wherein the ribs overly and fill the respective grooves.

Claim 18 (original): The sports equipment handle of claim 10 wherein a co-extrusion process is used to fill the respective grooves with the second material to define the respective ribs.

Claim 19 (original): A lacrosse stick handle comprising:
an elongate shaft made of a first material and including a plurality of elongate longitudinal grooves extending around the periphery thereof in spaced-apart relationship; and
a plurality of elongate longitudinal ribs made of a second material and overlying the plurality of elongate longitudinal grooves respectively.

Claim 20 (original): The lacrosse stick handle of claim 19 wherein a cover surrounds the shaft, the cover being made of the second material and defining the plurality of ribs overlying the grooves respectively.

Claim 21 (original): The lacrosse stick handle of claim 20 wherein a co-extrusion process is used to apply the cover to the shaft and the second material comprising the cover fills the grooves respectively.

Claim 22 (original): The lacrosse stick handle of claim 20 wherein the cover has an interior surface and the ribs protrude unitarily outwardly from the interior surface thereof, the cover being positioned and applied to the shaft in a relationship wherein the ribs overly and fill the grooves respectively.

Claim 23 (original): The lacrosse stick handle of claim 20 wherein the cover includes a generally flat exterior surface extending circumferentially around the shaft, the cover having a first thickness in the region of the shaft defining the grooves and a second lesser thickness in the region of the shaft without the grooves.

As indicated above, claims 13-16 were withdrawn in a prior Response and are reinstated herein as new claims 24-27:

Claim 24 (new): The sports equipment handle of claim 10 wherein the shaft includes exterior and interior surfaces and the edges define elongate longitudinal slits extending through the shaft, the ribs extending through the slits respectively and into the interior surface of the shaft.

Claim 25 (new): The sports equipment handle of claim 10 wherein the edges protrude outwardly from the exterior surface of the shaft and the ribs include respective interior surfaces configured to abut against the respective edges and an adhesive secures the ribs to the respective edges.

Claim 26 (new): The sports equipment handle of claim 10 wherein the shaft and ribs include interior and exterior surfaces respectively, the ribs being unitary with a one-piece elongate cover adapted to surround the shaft and the interior surface of the ribs being spaced from the edges respectively.

Claim 27 (new): The sports equipment handle of claim 10 wherein the plurality of edges define depressions therebetween and the ribs overly the depressions respectively.

New claims 28-31 are also presented:

Claim 28 (new): A sports equipment handle adapted for lacrosse and hockey comprising in coacting combination:

- an elongate, hollow, cross-sectionally polygonal shaft having

- a plurality of elongated, longitudinally extending, circumferentially successive, exteriorly substantially flattened side face regions, and

- a plurality of exterior, elongated, longitudinally extending grooves, each groove being located along a different interfacial edge portion situated between circumferentially adjacent pairs of said side face regions; and

- a generally continuous layer extending over said side face regions and defining exterior surface portions that are generally individually flattened when said layer is generally radially adjacent to said side face regions and that are generally radially thickened when said layer is radially adjacent to each of said grooves, said layer being comprised of relatively soft, pliable, resilient, impact-absorbing, plastic material, whereby said layer defines an elongated, radially interiorly extending, cushioning rib over each of said grooves.

Claim 29 (new): The handle of claim 28 wherein between circumferentially adjacent pairs of said side face regions and radially inwardly adjacent to each of said grooves said shaft is radially inwardly thickened.

Claim 30 (new): The handle of claim 28 which includes at one end thereof a tapered portion that includes a region of reduced diameter that is adapted to extend into a head portion, and that is adapted to improve whip and flex characteristics of said handle while concurrently preserving the cross-sectionally polygonal character thereof.

Claim 31 (new): The handle of claim 28 wherein said shaft is octagonal, has two diametrically opposed and parallel exterior faces of substantially equal width, and the six remaining exterior faces have a total width which is greater than the width of each of said parallel exterior faces with three of said six faces each being on each side of said parallel exterior faces.